

17 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT: Conversation with Senator Stuart Symington
Re CIA Budget**

1. With the Director's approval, I called on Senator Symington today to explain to him that we never had any intention of denying him information on the Agency budget, and to remind him that our budget figure had been mentioned to him at a briefing of our two Subcommittees last July and by me in a private conversation with him on 28 March 1969.

2. The Senator said this was true but that apparently he had not made his problem clear in his 14 April conversation with the Director.

3. The Senator went on to explain that he was deeply concerned about the future prospects of the American economy--"the way things are going now in another five years this country will be bflat broke." The U.S., said the Senator, is overcommitted and overextended and there must soon be a day of reckoning. In this connection, he predicts that our defense and foreign policy expenditures will be under increasing scrutiny and criticism.


4. Inevitably, said the Senator, the "exorbitant" expenditures of our intelligence community will become involved. This poses a serious threat to CIA because both the majority of the Congress and almost all of the general public are convinced the CIA budget represents the bulk of the national intelligence budget. Therefore, as "CIA's best friend" he wants to correct this misconception. In his travels he has found "one CIA man worth ten of anybody else in our Embassy" and he knows CIA is doing an outstanding job. ONI is pretty good in its field, Air Force is "awful" and the Army not much better. CIA is doing fine and Dick Helms is great, but will soon be in real trouble if the seriously exaggerated

impressions of how much money we are spending aren't corrected. Recurring contentions that we have a "\$2 billion" budget are taking hold.

5. At this point the Senator asked me to clarify the actual figures. I showed him the attached, explaining that about half of the increase from 1969 to 1970 in NOA was attributable to the inclusion for 1970 of the Radios, and the other half to pay increases and increased expenses in Southeast Asia.

6. The Senator said this was fine and promised not to use these figures as such. However, he said he would like to know the amount of the total community expenditures, broken down by DIA, NSA, the services, etc. I said I couldn't give him this figure offhand. He said he was sure the Director could get it for him and asked me to request that he do so. The Senator said he would like to make clear to his colleagues, and perhaps publicly, that the Agency budget was only a fraction--10% or 20% or whatever--of the national intelligence budget.

7. I told the Senator I would pass this request to the Director but reminded him of the sensitivity of the figures I had shown him and our concern about revelation of any aspects of our budget, even in fairly general terms.


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